

ENGAGING YOUR COMMUNITY: LIBRARIES AS PLACE

SPEAKERS: Robert Martin, Louise Blaylock, GladysAnn Wells
Introduction and summary by Milton T. Wolf

“The children using the libraries represented by the American Association of School Librarians today are the students who will be using the libraries represented by the Association of College and Research Libraries tomorrow, and all of them are the Public Library Association’s patrons of the future. These are not separate universes. United, they are the roadmap for a productive lifetime of reading, learning, and fulfillment.”—Leonard Kniffel, *American Libraries*, September 2005.

THE FACELESS USER LOOKING FOR FACES

For the majority of people looking for information today, the beginning of a search process usually begins on the Web. For scientists, in particular, the next step is usually an examination of preprints in their discipline (or email inquiries to colleagues). The third step of investigation generally occurs at conferences, either through formal presentations or networking. And, the fourth step finally involves looking at book(s). So books, what many associate with the Library’s traditional *raison d’etre*, are no longer the research/information draw that once brought patrons to the Library—even the Public Library.

And, while Library circulation, especially in Public Libraries, is way up, many, if not most, come to the Library to access e-mail, the Web or other electronic resources; but, since electronic resources, even if paid for by the Library, can generally be accessed remotely by those with computers at home, office or wherever, there are no longer the traditional reasons for visiting the Library, especially in the academic environment. Yet the so-called “faceless user” has actually made Libraries more desirable for its faces, for the opportunity to meet and form communities!

Even “Virtual Reference,” which has swept across the country, and is an excellent example of how Libraries are learning to bridge the gap of the “faceless user,” is but another reminder that Libraries are transforming socially. In many places this service is 24/7, yet few realize that the majority of those seeking Virtual Reference services are teenagers! According to the Pew Internet and American Life Project (2005), teenage use of the Internet has burgeoned immensely, so much so that the majority of teenagers between 12 and 17 are online with great regularity. They are not only playing games; they are seeking a variety of information topics, including health information. They seem to understand intuitively that “what you don’t know can really hurt you in life!”

This is just one more example of how different generations are reacting to and using technological advances in the information field. And, believe it or not, the largest demographic group of new email users are those 55 years and older!

At the same time, the Library as place, as a cultural context in which society renews and refreshes itself, where community reshapes and energizes itself, has emerged as a cornerstone of the Library's essence. However, a Library that only understands part of the demographic mosaic of its clientele, or worse, thinks its clientele all want the same thing, is not going to fare well in building community, or evolving the Library as "place." Even on academic campuses, only a third of the 16 million students are the traditional 18-22 year old fulltime cohort, so if the Library is to become a catalyst in bringing the diverse elements of community together, it must learn to cross generational divides as much as digital and technological ones.

While the concept of Library is going through a monumental sea change that is, in many ways, bringing it back to its philosophical roots: the agora, the place where people "meet and greet," exchange pleasantries and news, have something to eat and drink, and even gather information; and while technology has made it possible to access information from home, hotel, or wherever the computer can be connected, people are social creatures and are attracted to the Library because it is one of the few institutions that has a long history of welcoming the diverse groups that create community—all without charging fees!

After all, the user of the school library often goes on to become a user of the college/university library and the public library, especially as our nation becomes ever more one of lifetime learners. Realizing that Libraries, no matter whether they serve town and gown or more specialized commercial interests, are more alike than different when it comes to serving the interests of its community, Milton T. Wolf, Director of the King College Library at Chadron State College, invited three of the best thinkers and practitioners of the art of building communities to share their insights at the 25th Annual Charleston Conference.

These three notable public servants were asked to present and discuss the importance of "community" in institutions and how to develop, encourage, and sustain it. The three speakers, (1) Dr. Robert Martin, formerly the Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and now serving as the Lillian Moore Bradshaw Endowed Chair at Texas Woman's University, (2) Louise Blaylock, Chief Librarian at the Hartford Public Library and past recipient of Library Journal's prestigious "Librarian of the Year" award, and (3) GladysAnn Wells, Director of the Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records and past president of COSLA, all agreed that librarians must stimulate their constituents and act as a catalyst in making the library a "place" for community expression.

Remarks of Robert S. Martin
Twenty Fifth Charleston Conference
November 4, 2005

My thinking about this subject has lately been informed by the arguments that Mark Moore makes in his very important book, *Creating Public Value: Strategic Management in Government*. Moore is a professor at the John F. Kennedy School at Harvard. He has spent a lot of time working with public sector managers. He has developed a detailed analysis of what public managers should do, and a framework for judging their success.

Moore asserts that just as the aim of the manager in the private sector is to produce private value, in the form of revenue, profit, and capital growth, so too the aim of managerial work in the public sector is to produce public value.

In a sense, really, this is a no-brainer: if public enterprises do not create value for the public, then why would they be formed or continue to exist? The problem, of course, is how do you define and measure public value?

Moore describes a number of frames of reference or standards that have been used for reckoning public value, and concludes that none of the standard approaches or concepts really provides the best way to define public value. Moore argues that value is rooted in the desires and perceptions of individuals. In the private sector, private individual consumption is the final arbiter of value: profit and capital growth results from the accumulation of a myriad of individual decisions to satisfy desires by purchasing a product or a service. In the public sector, politics serves as the final arbiter of public value. The desires and perception of individuals are expressed through representative government. And therefore managers need to pay attention to politics to define the value that they are expected to produce.

There are three key concepts in Moorer's discussion about public value that I would like to call your attention to. The first of these is that value is determined not by the providers of services, but by the consumers. In other words, we do not get to decide what is valuable, our users or customers do. And this means that if we want to offer services that the public will value and support, it is imperative that we listen carefully and systematically to our elected officials and resource allocators to understand fully their

agendas, their concerns, and their goals. And then we need to take care to explain how libraries can help them achieve their goals and advance their agendas.

This is essentially a marketing approach. I am both amused and dismayed by the way librarians usually talk about “marketing.” In the discourse of our profession, “marketing” is often used as a synonym for “advertising” or “selling.” We use it to describe efforts to create awareness about services we provide and to promote appreciation for the work we do. That’s not marketing, that’s sales. In the business world, trying to convince an individual or group to purchase the product or service that you make or provide is called selling. Marketing, in contrast, is asking a group or individual what product or service that they want to buy, and then developing a product or service that meets the identified demand.

So what we need to do is real marketing. We need to use marketing tools like focus groups and surveys to provide structured ways to listen to the communities we seek to serve. And we do not need to ask them about what we do that they like and do not like. We need to pursue truly deep inquiries into what they want and need to make their lives better. And then we need to fashion programs and services that meet those needs and desires. For example, it is far less important to ask users what hours they want the library to be open than it is to ask them what their goals and needs are, and then think creatively about what we can do to help them achieve their goals or fulfill their needs. Ask them what are the issues in their daily lives that they care most about, and then respond appropriately.

The second key concept in Moore’s discussion of public value is the notion of distinctive competence, the thing that is core to the organization and that it does better than any other organization—what one of my professors used to call “our propitious niche.” To succeed in strategic management, it is imperative to focus on the core of the enterprise, to stick to our knitting. First, however, we must carefully define what our core business is.

Contrary to what we often hear in the rhetoric of the profession, the distinctive competence of libraries is not in providing access to information. Although libraries and librarians are indeed good at acquiring, organizing, and retrieving and transmitting information, there is nothing distinctive about that competence. There are many other professions (from accountant to information architect) who can claim such expertise, and many other organizations that can provide good information services.

Instead, I think, the distinctive competence of all libraries is to provide the resources and services that stimulate and support the creation and dissemination of knowledge—in other words, education. Perhaps it would be better to say that libraries—all libraries—are in the business of creating and sustaining learners—learners of all ages.

It should not be necessary to argue that the primary function of school libraries and academic libraries is to support education—that is their *raison d'être*. But in recent years I think that we have forgotten that the primary role of the public library is education, in the broadest and best sense of the term. In developing resources and services in response to identified and defined needs in the communities we serve, we must take care to remain focused on this distinctive competence. Education is what the public expects from the library, and education is what communities value.

Another key element in Moore's analysis of creating value is that we have to evaluate and demonstrate impact. That is one reason why the Institute of Museum and Library Services has been providing training to all grantees in outcome-based evaluation, and is requiring grantees to develop outcome-based measures for the success of their projects. We librarians simply have to do a better job of demonstrating the value that we provide to the communities that we serve. This does not mean that we have to quantify everything—good stories are important too. The best kind of evaluation of outcomes is when the library is so enmeshed in its community that the community can not imagine operating without it.

Of course, none of this focus on creating and demonstrating value is really new. In 1920, John Cotton Dana wrote "All public institutions ... should give returns for their cost; and those returns should be in good degree positive, definite, visible, measurable. The goodness of a [library] is not in direct ratio to the cost of its building and the upkeep thereof, or to the rarity, auction value, or money cost of its collections. A [library] is good only insofar as it is of use....Common sense demands that a publicly supported institution do something for its supporters and that some part at least of what it does be capable of clear description and downright valuation." I believe that the foundation for successful advocacy for libraries lies in ensuring that libraries create public value.

In her article in the November, 2002 issue of *American Libraries*, Joey Rodger of the Urban Libraries Council draws a clear distinction between being an advocate and being a player. "Advocates go out into the community and say 'library, library, library,'" Rodger says. "Players go out, listen, and then say 'economic development, child safety, literacy. Here's how we can help.' There's no question about who is welcome at more tables, or who is more valuable," she says.

A colleague of mine likes to say that everything that libraries do is about solving problems. Individuals come to libraries not to find information, for example, but to solve some problem. That problem may be serious, like how to cope with a life-threatening disease, or how to prepare for licensure in one's occupation. Or it may be as trivial as how to waste an afternoon in pleasant relaxation. Libraries solve problems, for individuals and for communities.

The point is simple: we who love libraries and who see ourselves as library advocates do not advocate for libraries because we like libraries. We advocate for libraries because we believe in the good work that libraries do, the difference that they make in our lives and in our communities. So if we want to be successful in helping libraries achieve those goals of community service, we need to stop being perceived as advocates for libraries, and start working to be perceived as advocates for community solutions. We need to align ourselves with the agendas of our elected officials and resource allocators. Whether

it is the local councilman whose primary priority is economic development, the congressman who is most interested in workforce development in his district, or the University Provost who wants to provide demonstrable measure of teaching and learning achievement on her campus, libraries can offer indispensable assistance in achieving those goals. We should strive to find the appropriate place for the library at the tables where decisions about these issues are being decided.

Another way to look at this is to return to the original definition of “advocate:” one who pleads the call of another. From this frame of reference, librarians (and library supporters) can not really be library advocates, since in pleading the cause of libraries they are pleading their own cause. Perhaps what is more important, they are perceived by others as pursuing their self-interest. Instead, we need to be advocates for the priorities of our resource allocators and elected officials, and for the communities that we seek to serve.

Here are the things I think we need to do to create public value and thus become players and partners rather than advocates:

1. Focus on our distinctive competence, which is in providing the resources and services that support learners of all ages;
2. Use marketing effectively, listening to our elected officials and our communities to identify their needs, and responding in creative and innovative ways to deliver what they want and need;
3. Evaluate our services for value, and communicate effectively about the value that we provide our communities;

In short, do not be an advocate, be a player, solve problems, create value. If you do, you will find that you have gone beyond advocacy to being a partner in the political process.

Remarks of Louise Blaylock

Louise Blaylock, implored the audience to “get out from behind your desks” and “walk the local beat” to find out what your community wants and needs. Louise quickly “bulleted” the audience with these questions:

- Is your library relevant in the face of
 - rapidly changing modes of learning?
 - rapidly changing faculty research needs and teaching strategies?
 - a rapidly changing student body?
 - rapidly changing technology?
- Are your audiences changing faster than you are?
- Are you a Boomer – and they’re Millennials?
- Does the campus community value the library’s services?
- Is the Web and increasing amounts of free scholarly material making your library obsolete?
- Are fiscal restraints making it increasingly difficult to meet rising expectations from students, faculty and the community?

I think the reason these questions may be eating at you is because you are in the same place I found myself when I arrived in Hartford. Then, we were not engaging our users. We were serving fewer and fewer customers – with yesterday’s services! But we were safe behind our desks! Where are you? Are you behind your desk? I think you need to engage every segment of your – to link their needs to your resources and expertise – developing and changing resources as you listen and learn.

When I say, YOU – I mean all library staff members. Involve all library staff – at all levels – from the librarians to the circulation staff. ENGAGE! Everyone needs to get face-to-face – that’s where the possibility of change takes hold --

- observe
- listen actively
- learn what users need
- learn what users value

Include EVERY SEGMENT –

- students – F/T, P/T, young and old
- faculty – research and course work
- administration
- Deans
- alumni
- parents
- citizenry

As you get face-to-face and begin to respond – links occur! You want – you need - the campus community to link to the library (and don’t overlook the football, basketball, swimming teams, etc.).

When the faculty and the students get your message – they spread your message. For example – we worked with neighborhood outreach workers to get people into our bilingual financial management classes. When people know and experience, first hand, what the library provides they will be selling the library to others.

Nothing is more powerful!

Nothing has more potential for change!

In 1995, we had zero people in adult learning programs. This year, 9,753 people attended our classes, workshops and training programs. Sure, technology drove some of the change – but the real change was people-driven!

We were out there – learning about our community –getting responsive!

First of all, we did it with what we call Neighborhood Teams. More than 60% of our staff attends community meetings, such as revitalization and civic associations, to identify issues and concerns and learn about what information is needed.

Doing this kind of work is now a part of every job description at the Hartford Public Library. We also bring in community leaders to talk to our staff about current issues including homelessness, youth at risk, and housing.

To put it another way, we need to be out “walking the neighborhood like a beat cop,” to get acquainted on the street, to bring ourselves face-to-face with our constituents.

We also serve other agencies and departments of governments with enthusiasm.

We make the Mayor’s initiatives – our initiatives:

- Homeownership
- Early literacy
- Public safety

We connect needs to existing services – and sometimes help create new services. Let me tell you what can happen when we are out there where it is actually happening. Our Youth Services Manager, for instance, a 20 year veteran librarian, attended a community meeting in one of the poorest sections of Hartford. With a long history and a historic name, Dutch Point had become simply a 50 family public housing project that was so deteriorated that it was slated for demolition. And there were no plans for re-building. The neighborhood was angry and frustrated because the Hartford Housing Authority said funding was only available for large scale projects – but not their needs!

The community wanted to challenge the lethargy of the Authority.

Our librarian really heard the anger and frustration and came back to the library and did the research; she discovered that the Feds did have money for small projects. This information gave the Dutch Point residents the impetus and information they needed to engage and challenge the local Housing Authority. In the end, the Hartford Housing Authority became the successful applicant for \$20 MM for a small-scale family housing

project in the Central Library's neighborhood. And the Dutch Point people will have housing!

They broke ground for the project yesterday! And our librarian was there! Since our folks have been engaging our communities, people see the library as

- Relevant
- Flexible
- Respected
- Valued
- And from our point of view, most importantly, a place to USE!!

When you are face-to-face with your community, you will learn so much about whom they are, what they need and want, and you will serve them better and better.

Your services will be tailored to real interests and needs. And you will be able to more fully participate in distance learning and access to electronic resources.

And, you will be recognized by decision-makers outside of your community of users –for example, by government officials, philanthropists and other academic institutions.

In my experience at a public library, involvement at the community level does capture the attention, and often the assistance, of the decision-makers and the policy-makers. I believe there are similar implications and opportunities for you in the academic community.

Take a first step in getting out into your communities...before the semester ends, attend classes for one week, find out what goes on and learn what students really need that you could provide, attend a department meeting, administrative meetings: learn to see them as your customers, even your guests – help them with grant research. Connect them to your expertise!

Let me share another story about the results of real community engagement. The Children's Librarian at our Mark Twain branch in the Asylum Hill section of Hartford is a tall, young man from Sierra Leone. Last year, there was a re-settlement of many Somalian and Liberian immigrants into his Asylum Hill community. He knows what it is like to be a stranger in a new land and not to be able to speak the language. So he went to the schools to see what could be done for the immigrant kids who had been placed in the 5th grade because they are tall and of "an age" to be in the 5th grade – even though they spoke very little English and could read even less of it.

Our librarian began working with the media specialist and the teachers – and now the children come to the library after school and he reads and works with them using their common language, Pathois, to learn English.

He also goes to their homes and finds the pre-schoolers who are not enrolled in school because parents find it too complicated to register them. Now the parents attend ESOL

classes and work with a Somalian language tutor at the library. And the library's manager for multicultural education is getting them connected – through the classes – to the pre-school providers.

It's just that we need to be where they are in order to do the work:

- Obtaining relevant information for people to use
- Connecting them to services they need.
- Understanding their cultural background and experience

All I can tell you is that once you get out in the community and start responding to the needs you learn about, nothing will be the same again! And that's good!!

Sure it is challenging and a bit scary. You initially feel you are giving up a lot of control, but what you get in return is opportunity after opportunity to do things that really make a positive difference, and you realize that you do have the needed information! Or that you know how to get it.

I believe that the situation you are facing is very similar to the one we in the public library system have faced and are facing. Let me leave you with one final story that is a result of the kind of outreach I am urging you to undertake.

We had learned from talking to teens that their view of the city of Hartford was a dark one. We also knew of their interest in using computers and learning new skills – teens want to learn by doing. Now the drop out rate in Hartford is horrendous!

The failure to achieve! To read! To graduate! To go on! It's an enormous concern!

But we believed that focused and sustained attention in a highly interactive program – utilizing the hook of technology and our strong connections to the neighborhoods – could make a difference. We called this project COLT, for Capital Opportunity through Technology, and also because COLT Arms Manufacturing Company became the subject matter for the project. The COLT program used state-of-the-art communications technology to have students share knowledge with peers, decision-makers and the greater community about the history of Colt Manufacturing and the history of Coltsville as a future national park. Teens loved the program!

Academic performance improved, student attendance improved, there was more participation in class discussions in school, mastery test scores are higher and more students stayed in school. All these results have been documented. It's a story with great results, but it is FIRST and foremost about being out and about -- engaged in the community! Teens helped us understand what needed to be done and how we could go about doing it.

I'd like to hear from you - about what you know, because we in Public Libraries have a lot to learn from your experience.

You are working with the “millennials” and X,Y and soon Z – and your experience, discoveries, models can help us as the millennials replace the Boomers as our primary customers. These new patrons were brought up on email, cell phones, MP3’s, Web surfing. They collaborate more than previous generations. You can help us understand what their needs will be, how we can make them comfortable and welcome.

And, increasingly, we see ourselves as important players in the education process. As academics you only have a short time with students – to sell the Product! But throughout their lifetime your students could be using academic resources – increasingly making career changes and going back to community or other colleges for new learning.

In the library we see all those single mothers in parenting classes who want to go to college for the first time. We have an opportunity to collaborate here!

- How to keep people aware of what’s available in colleges
- How to support career change and life enrichment.

The students you pass on will – on the strength of their positive academic library experiences –support our bond referendums and tax levies; they will bring their children to use the public library. These are the children we will pass on to you. And you will pass them back to us! Libraries are for life-long learning and we are in this together!

And we may give them back to you in retirement! Back as elders – able, in the leisure of retirement, to learn with more vigor than ever before!

Louise Blaylock’s final exhortation was, “Let’s stay connected! The success of each of our libraries benefits ALL libraries.”

Remarks of GladysAnn Wells

And, GladysAnn Wells reminded us that communities “change,” that they are not static demographic groups, that in less than ten years a community may change its coloration and needs. She agreed with Louise Blaylock that the most important aspect of community building is the ability to “listen.” As Arizona’s State Librarian she is ever mindful that there are major changes occurring as public institutions are transforming from a largely print world to a more digital one, and has never lost sight of the fact that libraries are community centers, no matter what format the information containers!

During her tenure as the Director of the Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records she has brought in more grant money than the library budget provided by the state. She has done this by making the State Library the hub of the libraries, museums, archives and information centers for all of Arizona—including strong relationships with the academic community. She understands that servicing a diverse group of users demands a diverse approach to administering services. What works for one group, won’t

necessarily work another. In Arizona, libraries are well positioned to reach people of all ages and education levels.

And, by far, one of the largest demographic cohorts in Arizona is that of older adults. It is no secret that Arizona libraries are national leaders in meeting the needs of active older adults. GladysAnn reports that “Our libraries are finding innovative ways to reach the untapped resource of Baby Boomer experience while providing Boomers with connections to meaningful work and civic engagement. Model programs for lifelong learning like those listed below are starting or underway in libraries across the state. Because of our innovative library leaders, we have been cited as [“A Statewide Laboratory for Change.”](#)

Chandler Public Library is part of a coalition bringing all community resources together under the umbrella of one exciting Boomer website, www.myboomerang.com – a Next Chapter project. The site provides links to resources on everything from health and wellness to re-careering and volunteering.	Phoenix Public Library has made assessing community needs and redesigning services for older adults a strategic priority...It is one of the first Lifelong Access Libraries to be named a Center for Excellence and Innovation.
Glendale Public Library began “Directions & Connections: Life Options for Mature Adults” with a grant in 2004...In 2005, Boomers and Seniors continue to benefit from an array of programs including those focused on their top concerns: health and financial information.	Scottsdale LifeVentures sponsored by Scottsdale Community College begins with a physical meeting space on campus – a welcoming space that will be replicated in satellites throughout the community via partners like the Scottsdale Public Library.
Mesa Life Options includes Mesa Community College, the City of Mesa and Mesa Senior Services...Peer Mentors in this Next Chapter project meet with people looking to retire and guide them through self discovery assessments. The, mentors will also guide people to community resources that fit their plans.	Tempe Connections is a citywide initiative to create a comprehensive one-stop resource within the library followed by satellite locations throughout the community – a Next Chapter project.
Parker Public Library earned a Community Development Block Grant for its Lifelong Learning Center. Now Parker is working with Arizona Western College to train and empower adults to research independently.	The Bonus Years: Connecting @ the Carnegie includes a core bibliography of books, articles and websites for people in transition...Managed by The Carnegie Center, a unit of the Arizona State Library, as part of a larger program for Boomers.
Arizona is one of the first states to support the national EqualAccess Libraries initiative in collaboration with Libraries for the Future, a national organization that	Arizona has four Next Chapter projects underway: Chandler, Mesa, Scottsdale and Tempe. The Next Chapter projects (described above) promote access to

champions the role of libraries in American life and works to strengthen libraries and library systems. Over 30 libraries across the state have participated in this program to develop libraries as centers for civic engagement. EqualAccess programs foster collaboration, outreach and use of technology to bring innovative services to Arizona communities.	meaningful choices for work, service, learning and social connections. The premise is that these activities, and libraries, play a crucial role in the vitality of older adults and can enrich community life. They are led by Civic Ventures , a national non-profit working to expand the contributions of older Americans to society.
Libraries for the Future has worked closely with the Arizona State Library for nearly five years to bring together local leaders, library leaders and legislators as partners in crafting and implementing a vision for library programs including those with a focus on lifelong access.	Arizona is a member of the National Advisory Committee for Lifelong Access Libraries . The 25-member group includes leading gerontologists, social workers, government officials and other specialists on aging. It guides an effort to transform libraries into centers for productive aging.

It is easy to see from the list above of the various associations that Arizona Libraries has brought together to provide services to the older adults of Arizona that Arizona librarians have “gotten out from behind their desks!” And closely allied with the Baby Boomer issues, but also of the concern to all age groups is “healthcare.” Here again the Arizona State Library has worked with numerous groups to so that Arizona libraries are a seminal place to get relevant information on all aspects of health care:

Arizona Libraries Provide:

Access: accessible to all ages and backgrounds, on-site or remotely; bringing communities together in rural and urban Arizona.

Trust: highly trusted & neutral, allowing partnering groups to work together on health issues/concerns.

Programs, Services & Training: health literacy, evaluation, consumer health information.

Resources: diverse informational sources, no fee electronic information. Libraries provide the solution for the increased need for Health Information. Health information consumers are faced with complex and varied sources. Patients increasingly have less personalized time with medical professionals. With rapid medical advancements and informed patient requirements, it has become more and more essential to have guidance. Increased information on health related topics is available on the Internet, but much of the information is outdated or false. Libraries provide assistance with evaluating resources and providing valid, trusted sources in a neutral environment.

- Health Initiatives in Arizona

- AZ Health Sciences Library; University of Arizona
(<http://www.ahsl.arizona.edu/>)
- Library is open to everyone and all library materials and computers are available for use within the library. All AZ library card holders can request materials at no charge through their public library. Free Ask a Health Librarian online resource is available. AZ residents may purchase a library card for \$60 per year.
- The U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) winner for the 2004 NCLIS
- Blue Ribbon Consumer Health Information Recognition Awards for Libraries. CHILE: Consumer Health Information Links for Everyone
(<http://www.chilehealth.org/>)
- Consumer health information collaboration between Tucson-Pima Public Library and the AZ Health Sciences Library, U of A. Includes information on Diseases, Insurance, Medication, and Providers.
- Funded in part with Federal funds from the National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health.
- EqualAccess (<http://www.lff.org>)
- Professional development initiative for public libraries provided by Arizona State Library, Archives & Public
- Records, in partnership with Libraries for the Future.
- 15 libraries each year are selected to participate and receive training on needs assessments, planning, programming and outreach for underserved populations.
- Get Real, Get Fit! (<http://www.lff.org>)
- National library-based program promoting physical fitness and healthy eating made possible by a grant from Libraries for the Future and the MetLife Foundation.
- Participating libraries include East Flagstaff Community Library, Glendale Public Library, Tempe Public Library. Health and Wellness Resource Center
(http://www.peoriaaz.com/Library/library_databases_health.asp)
- Peoria Public Library's Health Information databases provide a variety of health sources online. Life Changes: The Future is Now.
- Parker Public Library's project includes computer training and consumer health classes that enable community members to independently access accurate and timely health information. Funded in part by LSTA grant.
- Operation Health Outreach

- Program developed by Glendale Public Library to raise public awareness and basic knowledge of critical health issues to minority groups. Includes free seminars, health fair, and resource collection.
- Turning Point (<http://www.turningpointprogram.org>)
- National Initiative to transform and strengthen the U.S. public health system; supports Public Health Information Center in libraries, health departments, & tribal centers.
- Training: AZ Academy Without Walls trains frontline public health workers; Advocates for training in communities on health needs and participation in statewide public health planning.

And while the different groups that are served by Arizona Libraries are legion, it is important to mention that the needs of children and families are well targeted, for everyone's future depends on them. Arizona libraries provide leadership in school readiness by offering:

Access

- to information about the vital role parents and childcare providers play in preparing children for school.
- to the books that children need to have in their everyday lives.

Programs

- that help parents and childcare providers understand their roles as children's first, most important teachers.
- that model best practices for parents and childcare providers through high-quality children's programming delivered by librarians knowledgeable in the pre-reading skills. Resources for parents and childcare providers to use the strategies that they have learned to prepare their children to be successful in school.

Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records provides:

- Funding from the Library Services and Technology Act administered by the Institute of Museum and Library Services.
- Training by offering workshops that help library staff members, volunteers, and their community partners develop their skills in early literacy.
- Consulting Services through site visits and ongoing support by professionals knowledgeable in the areas of early literacy and library services to children and families. Examples of the many projects being conducted throughout the state are highlighted below.

Building a New Generation of Readers

(<http://www.lib.az.us/extension/BuildingANewGeneration.pdf>)

- A statewide early literacy project designed by the Arizona State Library, Building a New Generation of Readers provides public and school librarians with the tools and materials to teach parents and childcare providers strategies for preparing children to come to school ready to read.
- The Arizona State Library supplies libraries with the Public Library Association's Every Child Ready to Read @ Your Library materials that are based on current federally funded research and have been evaluated and found to have significant influence on the early literacy behaviors of parents and childcare providers. Thirty-six libraries throughout the state are participating in the first year of this initiative.
Family Place (<http://www.lff.org/programs/family.html>)
- Workshops facilitated by librarians in the 32 Arizona Family Place sites for children ages 1-3 and their parents and caregivers feature professionals from community agencies who provide information and answer questions informally while children and parents or caregivers interact with books and toys or work on an art project.
- The Arizona State Library partners with Libraries for the Future in supporting this project. Flagstaff City-Coconino County Public Library's Literacy Begins at Home.
- Workshops which included a family storytime presentation of literacy development and library services information, and the distribution of free books were held for the Early Head Start program, the Teenage Parenting program, the Mom-to-Mom Support Group, and the Healthy Families program.
- Over 100 families attended workshops and an additional 119 families had literacy information and books distributed to their homes by Healthy Families family service workers. A total of over 1700 children's books of varying age and reading levels were distributed to families during the 2003-2004 grant period. La Paz County Libraries' Healthy Babies/Healthy Readers.
- New parents, grandparents, and daycare providers who visited the La Paz County Health Department, WIC program, and Indian Health Services Hospital were given a goodie bag containing a baby picture frame magnet with library hours, a bookmark, and information about library services in La Paz County to encourage them to begin reading to the babies in their care.
- During the 2003-2004 grant period, 500 parents, grandparents, or guardians, brought the coupon from their bag to a La Paz County library or its bookmobile to trade for a free board book. Tucson-Pima Public Library's Ready to Read.

- Partnering with Child and Family Resources, the library trained 43 in-home childcare providers during 2003-2004 in early brain development as it relates to early literacy and pre-reading.
- For the last class session, families attended. Storytimes were held, and information was given to parents.

TRANSFORMATION OF LIBRARIES

Libraries not only are shifting from print to digital, but they are also moving from ownership to leasing the resources that they offer. As Libraries change to serve the needs of a rapidly changing world society, we will, perforce, have to get “out from behind our desks” and “walk the beat” and know and be known by our diverse constituents, including our “resource allocators,” to quote Bob Martin. As information technology evolves, we will have to assist our constituents to understand it, use it and grow with it. We are the guides on the side!

While services such as coffee cafes, computer access, and collaborative environments often lead the list of new enticements offered by libraries, it is the library as “place,” as “community,” as “information haven” that keep the “guests” returning. Welcome to the New/Old Library!